UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/1998/140
3 April 1998

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Fifty-fourth session
Agenda item 10

QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND FUNDAMENTAL FREEDOMS IN ANY PART OF THE WORLD, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO COLONIAL AND OTHER DEPENDENT COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES

Letter dated 16 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Azerbaijan to the United Nations Office at Geneva addressed to the Secretariat of the Commission on Human Rights

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith* the texts of the appeals of the Chairman of the Supreme Spiritual Council of the Peoples of the Caucasus and the leaders of the Christian Orthodox Church and Jewish communities of the Republic of Azerbaijan addressed to the international organizations, heads of State, peoples and religious figures of the world.

I would be grateful if you could circulate the present letter and the above-mentioned appeals as an official document of the fifty-fourth session of the Commission on Human Rights under agenda item 10.

(Signed) S. EIVAZOVA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

---

* The attachment is circulated as received in the language of submission only.

GE.98-11644 (E)

Annex

Appeal of the Leaders of Christian Orthodox Church and Jewish Communities of the Republic of Azerbaijan addressed to the Heads of State, Peoples and Religious Figures of the world

We, the heads of the Christian and Jewish communities of Azerbaijan, appeal to the conscience of the world community and of all people of good will.

Azerbaijan is the indivisible homeland and common home of the sons and daughters of many peoples professing different religious. For 10 years now, our country has been the innocent victim of aggression by Armenia, which seized and is still holding a fifth of the territory that has been Azerbaijani since time immemorial.

The war, imposed by a greedy neighbour, brought Azerbaijan and its multinational people enormous distress and suffering, which are continuing to this day. The barbarous acts perpetrated by Armenia led to the death of tens of thousands of people, destroyed the fruits of their creative labour, laid waste to towns and villages and desecrated temples and cemeteries. The cruelty and savagery of the aggressor were horribly demonstrated in Khodjaly, where the peaceful, defenceless population of this entire Azerbaijani town, including women, children and old people, were subjected to barbarous destruction. The tragedy of Khodjaly, which occurred exactly six years ago, is comparable to the tragedies that took place in Lidice and Khatyn.

It is incomprehensible that such a crime against humanity was committed at the end of the twentieth century. One of the main reasons for it is the fact that world public opinion, from the very beginning, failed to condemn Armenia as a usurper that flouted all the norms of international law and general morality. Convinced of its impunity, the aggressor still continues to occupy 20 per cent of the territory of Azerbaijan, having turned more than a million people into refugees. The most recent events in Armenia demonstrate that that

country does not intend to renounce its policy of expansionism and is prepared to resort to any means, including military ones, in order to hold on to the Azerbaijani lands that were seized by force of arms and to thwart efforts to achieve a just peace.

Armenia's actions are a defiant challenge to all mankind, a test of its conscience and humanity and its faithfulness to the age-old values of goodness and justice. The sacred service of peacekeeping signifies the affirmation of the will of the Most High on Earth, peace, the just settlement of all conflicts and the elimination of hotbeds of international tension. We, the heads of the Christian and Jewish religions in Azerbaijan, also see our duty in this. We fervently wish that all peoples and countries hear our call, be filled with our pain and immediately take decisive steps to halt the aggressor and restore peace in our tormented Azerbaijani land. We request religious leaders to be our ambassadors and bring this appeal to their peoples and Governments so that every heart will be imbued with our impassioned entreaty.

In affirmation of peace, kindness and justice and in order to eliminate evil and violence, all people, regardless of their national affiliation and religion, must stand together, for we have a single Creator and we share the same humanity. With our faith and hope in this, we raise our prayers to the Most High. Amen.

(Signed) Archimadrite Aleksandr
Diocesan Head of the Russian
Orthodox Churches in Azerbaijan

(Signed) Moshe Bekker
Head of the European Jewish
Community in Baku

(Signed) Semyon IKHILOV
Head of the Community of
Mountain Jews in Baku